

Reins and Hand Positions for Western Riding

Roping Reins



Roping reins are to be held essentially the same way as english reins, with the rein coming between the fourth and fifth fingers, and then the thumb and first finger (see picture, and refer to Pony Club manual).

Split Reins



With Snaffle Bit: Split reins should be held 2-handed, much in the same way as english reins except that there are 2 reins in each hand. The proper way to hold these is to place the rein leading to the horse's mouth in the active position in that hand. For example, the Left rein would go from the horse's mouth and to the L hand between the 4th and 5th fingers, then would go across the horse's neck at the withers to the other hand. The right rein would do the same on the right side. The pinky or 5th finger would be utilized to keep the 2 reins separate in the hand (see picture).



With Shanked Bit: The split reins should be held in one hand of the rider's choice. The rider's hand should be held knuckles facing down toward the horse's withers and the back of the hand should be horizontal. The reins should be placed between the thumb and 2nd (or pointer) finger, and between the 2nd and 3rd (or middle) finger. The tails of the reins will hang down on the same side of the horse's neck as the hand being used (ie Left hand, reins on Left side of horse's neck). The free hand should be held as if holding reins, on other side of horn.



Mecate Reins



Mecate reins are to be held essentially like english reins or roping reins, except that any extra length of reins between the hands may be coiled and held in one hand of rider's choice. The tail of the macerate may be tucked into belt or into a keeper, but should not be tied for safety. The loop of the tail should not hang below the bottom of the horse's shoulder. Mecate reins may be used with a bosal hackamore (as pictured to the side), or on a snaffle bit with slobber straps (see last picture).



Romel Reins



Romel reins are to be held in an upright fist. Reins should come from horse's mouth to the bottom of the fist (by the 5th finger) and then extend up through fist (as if holding an ice-cream cone). Tail of Romel should be held in other (non-rein) hand, and hands should be a minimum of 18" apart (see picture).

